

STATE OF LOUISIANA
Projects Proposed by Calcasieu Parish
May 22, 2006
Coastal Impact Assistance Program Allocations

Calcasieu Parish

PROJECT TITLE: American Wetlands Discovery Center

PROJECT CONTACT:

Calcasieu Parish Police Jury
Grant Bush, Coastal Zone Administrator
(CPS)
David Richard, Stream Wetland Service,
LLC (Nominator)
Mayor Randy Roach, City of Lake
Charles (Nominator)

Division of Planning and Development
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Entity/ Individual Nominating: Calcasieu Parish, City of Lake Charles, and Stream
Wetland Services, LLC

Location: Lake Charles on lakefront between Civic Center and Southwest Louisiana
Tourist Bureau - Project description attached.

Duration: 4 Years

Total Estimated Cost- Project Cost Share Type and amounts of non-CIAP funds proposed,
if any:

Proposed State CIAP _____	\$5 Million
Proposed Calcasieu Parish CIAP _____	\$1 Million
Proposed Cameron Parish CIAP _____	\$1 Million
City of Lake Charles _____	\$ 5 Million
Private grants _____	<u>\$10 Million</u>
Total cost _____	\$20 Million

Funding Request by Year: 2007-2010

SUMMARY WITH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

The goal is to assist the City of Lake Charles in its effort to provide infrastructure and housing for an educational facility that will educate the visitor on wetlands and coastal uses from the tall pines of Vernon Parish to the Gulf coast Cameron Parish. A joint effort is needed to accomplish this endeavor. A public/private alliance for ownership and operation enables the facility to earn capital funding while covering operating cost with revenues generated by an estimated 270,000 annual visitors.

AUTHORIZED USES:

Explanation of projects consistent with CIAP criteria: Criteria (#1) Conservation, restoration and protection of coastal areas, including wetlands; and (#5) mitigation of the impacts of OCS activities through funding of onshore infrastructure projects and public service needs. (Description of intent to use CIAP funds: N/A)

The development of the OCS and the oil and gas industry in Louisiana has caused immense loss of wetlands through the alteration of the historical hydrology of the coastal area. These areas have experienced a loss of over one million acres of Louisiana Coastal wetlands. The general public is not educated on this loss or exposed directly to the loss. This project will educate children, adults, academia, and tourists to the immense wetland loss of Louisiana. This education opportunity will heighten awareness of the functions and values of wetlands and the need for restoration and protection of this valuable resource.

The facility will be owned by the City of Lake Charles. A private not-for-profit 501.C.3 corporation will manage the American Wetlands Discovery Center. Patterned on proven models, the facility will be self-supporting with its projected \$3.7 M annual operating cost fully funded through admission/concession/membership and facility rental/catering revenues. The Center will employ approximately 40 people and impact the area economy by an estimated \$32 M.

The facility is planned for a 56,000 square-foot exhibit center and will emerge on six acres of wetlands along the city's downtown I-10 corridor. It will replicate a Louisiana coastal village with rustic, raised buildings and fresh and saltwater habitats for native plants and animals. Here, visitors will discover the wonder of wetlands through such interactive, sensory learning tools as touch tanks, computer games and a dramatic immersion theater experience studded with special effects. Changing exhibit areas will enable information updates and presentation of new themes-encouraging repeat visitation while expanding the facility's teaching potential. The Center will engage and motivate visitors to help restore and preserve Louisiana's treasured wetlands.

AUTHORIZED USES:

- Explanation of projects consistent with CIAP criteria: Criteria (#1) Conservation, restoration and protection of coastal areas, including wetlands; (#2) Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources; and (#5) mitigation of the impacts of OCS activities through funding of onshore infrastructure projects and public service needs.
- Description of intent to use CIAP funds: Calcasieu Parish contribution to be \$1 M.